

VZCZCXRO4265
OO RUEHPT
DE RUEHBY #0976 3030645
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 300645Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2200
INFO RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3723
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0154
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 6745
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 5011
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 5010
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000976

NOFORN
SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/OA BALTON, PHELPS, COMMERCE FOR NOAA, WHITE
HOUSE FOR CEQ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2019
TAGS: [SENV](#) [PREL](#) [OPDC](#) [AS](#)
SUBJECT: ENVIRO MINISTER GARRETT UNHAPPY ABOUT U.S. WHALING
MOVES

REF: A. SECSTATE 108957
[1](#)B. CANBERRA 951

Classified By: Deputy Economic Counselor Ramon Negrón, Reasons 1.4(b)(d)
)

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary: Environment Minister Garrett, who led the Australian delegation to the Santiago Support Group (SG) IWC meetings, has been undermined by the U.S. decision to launch a new initiative without coordinating with Australia prior to those meetings. Garrett also sees the subsequent letter to FM Smith from the Secretary as an attempt to influence their internal deliberations. Australia is approaching a decision point on how to deal with Japan on whaling, and the proposal at the SG, if it goes forward, would greatly curtail their options. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C/NF) David Williams, Chief of Staff to Environment Minister Peter Garrett, told Econoff October 28 that Garrett was dismayed by the U.S. proposal (ref A) at the recent Santiago Support Group meetings. Williams expressed surprise that the proposal was previewed with "others" (which we take to mean Japan) but not Australia, particularly considering the effort Garrett and FM Smith have made to work with the USG on this issue. Williams said that a discussion of this proposal before the meetings could have brought Australia into the mix in a positive way, if the goals and methods were clear and consistent with Australia's own.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) Williams complained that the Secretary's October 22 letter could only be read as an attempt to influence Australia's internal deliberations on whaling policy. The wording of the letter was such that it called into question whether the U.S. and Australia have the same goals on whale conservation, Williams argued. Noting the reference in the letter to the trilateral relationship between the U.S., Australia, and Japan, Williams said that "we are all in this (whaling negotiations) together, and need to work together to get progress." With the Japanese whaling fleet preparing to set sail for Southern waters, Williams said the GOA will be setting out a unified position on how to respond over the next few weeks.

A CONVERSATION AMONG FRIENDS

[1](#)4. (C/NF) Williams, who was friendly and frank throughout, took pains to note that this is a conversation between friends who should be able to resolve these kinds of differences reasonably. He suggested exploring the details

in a discussion at the experts level. Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Assistant Secretary Zena Armstrong told us October 29 that Australia is very interested in talking in more detail with NOAA, especially to discuss the annexes on international observers, vessel monitoring and DNA registries in the proposal.

15. (C/NF) Comment: Both Williams and Armstrong said the strong tone and link to strategic priorities in the Secretary's letter pose a challenge. This contrasts sharply with the response we got from FM Smith's staff (ref B). Garrett's concern will be that the Santiago proposal and the follow-up will limit his options in debating with Smith and others what to do next. We were told that legal action against Japan is still on the table, notwithstanding the letter. A perception that unilateral action could, or already has, hurt cooperation with the United States will put Qalready has, hurt cooperation with the United States will put greater focus on reaching consensus in upcoming cabinet meetings on the way forward. This will help weaken those who are arguing for the most aggressive range of responses, and could push Australia into working with the proposed SG option.

CLUNE